The Southern PATRIOT

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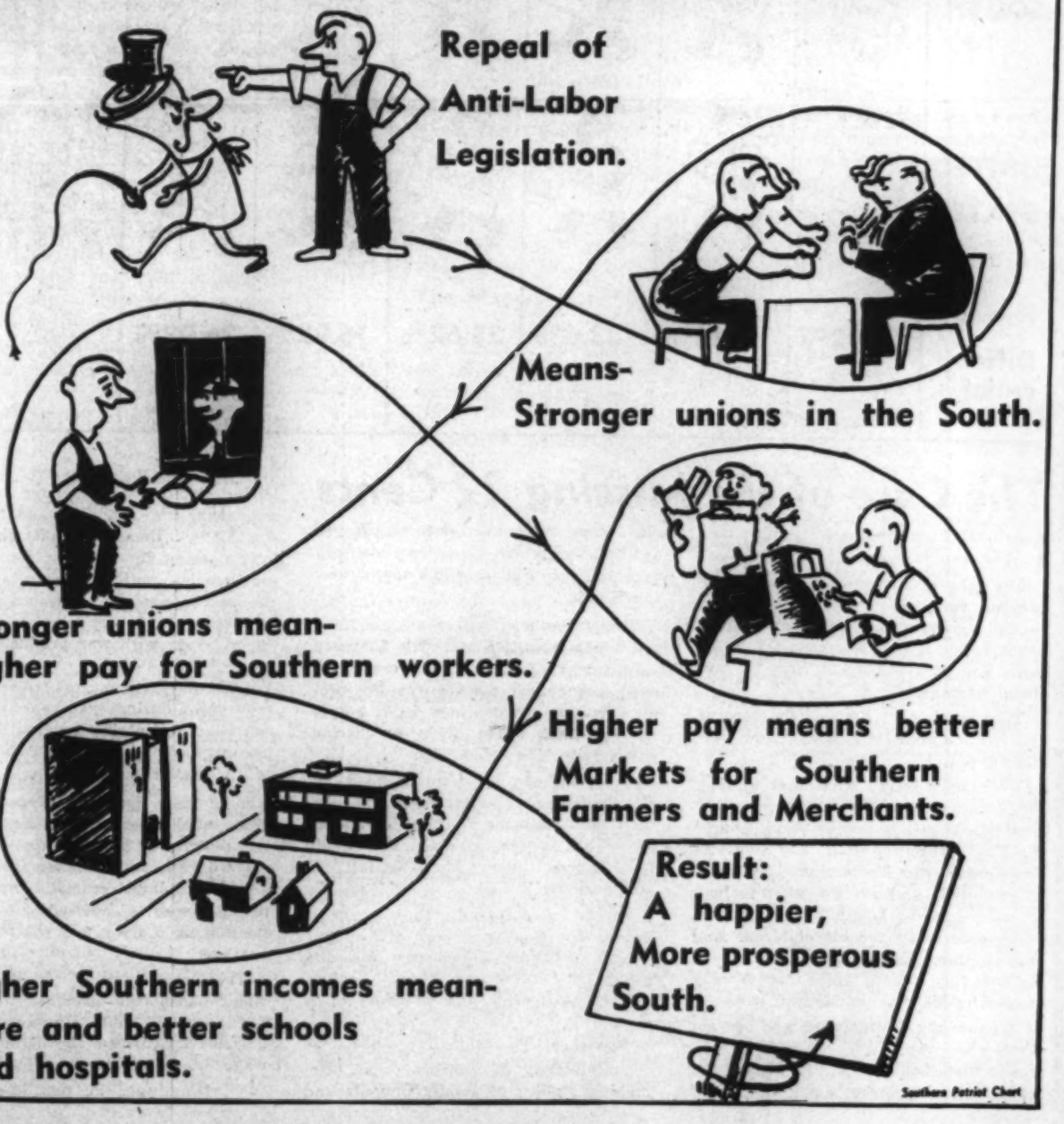
THE SOUTH'S STAKE IN LABOR'S RIGHTS


Repeal of Anti-Labor Legislation.
Means- Stronger unions in the South.
Stronger unions mean- Higher pay for Southern workers.
Higher pay means better Markets for Southern Farmers and Merchants.
Result: A happier, More prosperous South.
Higher Southern incomes mean- More and better schools And hospitals.
Southern Patriot Chart

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE
In Jobs Covered By Unemployment Compensation

1944	All Covered Industries	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Public Utilities	Service	
SOUTH	$1798	$2365	$2371	$1879	$1839	$1275	
UNITED STATES	$2302	$2527	$2744	$2525	$2214	$1745	
Percent Differential	21.92%	6.42%	13.6%	25.62%	16.92%	26.92%	

Source: Labor in the South, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bulletin 898

Southern Patriot Chart

The Case of the Missing 22 Cents

INDUSTRY discriminates against the Southern worker.

The chart above shows that the average Southern worker covered by unemployment compensation laws makes about $1800 a year and that this is 22 cents less on every dollar than the national average.

That missing 22 cents is the core of the South's greatest problem: low purchasing power.

Everybody knows what that missing 22 cents means to the Southern worker himself. It means poorer food, poorer clothing, poorer housing, less comforts for himself and his family, than workers in other sections are able to buy. It means poorer health, less education, less opportunity for his children. And all of these things in turn make it harder for him to raise his earning power by his own unaided efforts.

What many Southerners who are not themselves wage workers fail to realize is that that 22 cents is missing not only from the worker's pay check, but also from their own pockets. Wages are the fuel which keeps our economy running, just like gasoline keeps your car running.

When Southern wages are too low, the blight spreads first to the Southern farmers. The farmer's natural and most economical market for his produce is the city workers in the area nearest him. When their purchasing power fails, his market fails.

The Southern merchant is hit next. The workers and farmers, together with their families, make up the great majority of his customers. When they don't have enongh money, his sales fall off and business is bad.

So the curse spreads, from group to group. The Southern wage differential results not just in poverty for one group of Southerners, but in holding up the prosperity and progress of a region.

For years, the Heller Committee at the University of California has been making studies of family budgets and the cost of living. For the year 1944, the Heller Committee calculated that the annual income of "health and decency" was $2,964. Remember, this figure allows nothing for luxuries, nothing for emergencies, nothing for savings—just the bare minimum of a decent standard of living. 1944 was an exceptionally "good" year with war production near its peak and very little unemployment. Yet the Department of Labor figures show that, during that year, the average Southern worker covered by unemployment compensation made only 60% of the Heller minimum.

Even this figure gives too rosy a view of the actual situation, because the two lowest-paid groups of Southern workers, farm and domestic workers, are excluded from the benefits of unemployment compensation and hence their income does not show in these averages.

This chart shows something else which is of the greatest importance for the whole South. The groups of industries which have the highest annual wage are the same groups of indus-

(Continued on next page)

Whose Rights Need Protection?

THERE will be a lot of wind blowing from Congress and State legislatures in the weeks ahead about labor legislation. To understand what the gentlemen are talking about we need to bear in mind a few first principles.

The first is that unions are not merely desirable, they are absolutely necessary, for the good of the entire community.

> **"Long ago we stated the reason for labor organizations. We said that union was essential to give laborers opportunity to deal on an equality with their employer."**
>
> U. S. Supreme Court, NLRB vs. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corp., 301 U.S. 1.

The second thing that we need to remember is that the struggle of the workers for the right to organize has not been a bout between evenly matched opponents, but a long uphill fight against overwhelming odds. It is a fight in which the boss has had almost all the weapons on his side. He has been able to organize freely, through corporations recognized and protected by law, yet deny such right to his workers. He has been able to discharge and blacklist unionists, terrorize some workers through threats of discharge and buy off others by favoritism or bribes, sponsor company unions, send agents and spies into the labor organizations, hire goon squads and armies of scabs, employ injunctions ,police and national guards against strikers. Against this mighty arsenal, the workers have had nothing but their bare legal right to organize and act together. Even the law has been all on the employer's side. His property rights have been fully protected by law, while there has been no law to protect the worker's right to his job, his wage, or his working conditions.

The Wagner Act

This is the situation which the New Deal Congress under Roosevelt's leadership recognized and tried to correct, in part, by the adoption of the Wagner Act in 1935. The purpose of the Wagner Act was simply to prevent employers from using their economic power to keep their workers from organizing. It did not force them to yield to any of their workers' economic demands. It just forced them to permit their workers to get together and present those demands collectively. It worked well. During the 12 years the Wagner Act was in force union membership grew from four million to fifteen million and living standards and prosperity rose accordingly.

Beware of the man who tells you he is for Taft-Hartley repeal, BUT we can't go back to the Wagner Act because that was unfair and pro-union—we must have something that bears equally on the employer and the union. What he really wants is to restore the inequality which the Wagner Act was designed to correct. What he really wants is for the employers to hold the whip hand again, as they had always done before 1935.

Beware of the man who says: "If you don't like Taft-Hartley, what anti-labor legislation do you propose? The unions are getting too powerful and must be regulated to protect the public."

Corporation and "Economic States"

But it is not the unions which have become so powerful they can run roughshed over the public interest. Quite the contrary. Here is the testimony of the Temporary National Economic Committee, a committee of the U. S. Senate, set up in 1938 at President Roosevelt's request to study the power of big business:

> **"Corporations in modern times are economic states with powers in many instances fully as great as that of political states of the American union."**

It is precisely the unions which are the public's best allies in keeping these "economic states" from growing so powerful that they can defy all efforts toward public control. And the stronger the unions are, the safer the public will be from the danger.

The election last November was a clear mandate for a return to New Deal principles. The New Deal principle on labor legislation was that the public interest requires stronger unions and the role of government should be to offset the employer's unfair economic advantage sufficiently to allow the unions to become strong. Any repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act which does not return to this principle, and to the Wagner Act which embodied it, will be an empty gesture.

The Missing 22 Cents

(Continued from page 2)

tries which have the least discrimination against the South. They are praccisely the same groups of industries in which the labor unions are strongly organized. In this chart, the groups which show up best in both respects are "mining" and "construction." The figures for mining include both the coal industry, organized by the powerful United Mine Workers, now independent, and oil, in which the Oil Workers industrial Union—CIO is strong. Construction has long been well organized by the AFL building trades unions. Service industries, on the other hand, in which unions are comparatively weak show not only the lowest annual wage, but also the highest percentage discrimination against the South.

Where unions are strong, the Southern worker has a better standard of living and the South itself gets a more nearly even break.

The whole nation needs stronger unions, if only to keep purchasing power from falling too law and bringing on another depression. But the South needs them even more urgently than does any other section.

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THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

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UNIONS ARE PEOPLE

1 SOCIAL SECURITY benefits increased and expanded to permit agricultural workers, teachers, and others now excluded, to receive old age, unemployment, and other benefits.

2 FEDERAL aid for schools permitting Southern States, with most of the Nation's children but so little of its wealth, to bring its schools up to the national level.

clinics in rural communities.

MILLIONS of people working together to improve living conditions for themselves and their families and for you and your family.

IN the past 15 years unions have been in the vanguard of those working for all social legislation that has helped the common man.

HERE are a few of the things unions are demanding today:

clinics in rural communities.

4 HOUSING program to wipe out slums, and give every family a decent home at a price it can afford.

5 FAIR wages, decent working conditions, job security.

6 CIVIL RIGHTS program including the elimination of the vote tax, and freedom for all children of all races, creeds and nationalities to learn, play, grow up and work in a world free from segregation, the quota system, and other forms of discrimination.

THE SOUTH NEEDS UNIONS

TOOL CHEST FOR UNION BUSTING

SINCE the results of last November's election have given the administration and Congress a clear and undeniable mandate to repeal the Taft-Hartley anti-labor law, the enemies of unions in Congress have evidently concluded that their chances of saving the Taft-Hartley Act, as such, are no longer bright. But they still hope to save its substance by a maneuver, which they are calling the "single package." The advocates of the "single package" desire to combine formal "repeal" of the Taft-Hartley law with a whole series of crippling amendments to the Wagner Act. The substance of the "single package" formula, therefore, is to retain all, or as many as possible, of the Taft-Hartley law's effects, while making a pious show of repealing its name. This is not carrying out the election mandate; it is a scheme to evade it.

Labor and its allies, on the other hand, are demanding a straight repealer, with no ifs, ands or buts, for the purpose of restoring the full effectiveness of the Wagner Act.

Taft-Hartley Law

Southerners who wish to see the labor unions strengthened, because of the great benefit this development would bring to the whole South, need to know the main provisions of the Taft-Hartley law and how they cripple unions, in order to recognize and oppose them regardless of the label under which they are brought forward.

You're just the man I need to explain the benefits of the Taft-Hartley law to my employees . . .

Union Security

Unlike the Wagner Act, which tried to make unions more secure, the Taft-Hartley Law attempts to prevent union security. It does this by prohibiting the closed shop (a contract under which only union members may be hired) and attaching numerous difficulties, delays, red tape and exceptions to the attainment of a union shop a contract under which all persons hired must join the union). The effect of this is that no matter how long the union is established or how large a majority it represents, it can never make its position really safe. The boss can always undermine it by bringing in "workers" who are hired to fight the union and assigning them jobs in the shop.

Taft-Hartley even permits this technique to be used on a grand scale. In a strike, the boss has only to pack his plant with scabs and call for an election in which the striking workers are disfranchised and the scabs vote in a company union.

The Wagner Act attempted to prevent the firing of workers for union activity. Taft-Hartley does the opposite. It prohibits the Board from reinstating a worker fired "for cause." This means that if the boss wants to fire a worker for union activities he can do so easily and safely so long as he assigns some legal cause, no matter how trivial or superficial or trumped up the "cause" may be.

"Jurisdictional Strikes"

Taft-Hartley limits the causes for which a strike may be called and still be considered legal. For instance, it is not legal if its purpose is to force the employer to assign work to a particular group. This is called "prohibiting jurisdictional strikes," but its effect is that an established union can see the boss importing a rival organization, or company union, into the shop and there is nothing it can legally do to stop him.

A strike is not legal if it is caused by refusal to handle "hot cargo," that is, goods produced in a plant which is on strike or on the unfair list or destined for such a plant. This is called "prohibiting secondary boycotts," but its effect is to force the workers to scab on each other and to deprive them of the only weapon by which they can protect both themselves and employers under union contract from the unfair competition of the "runaway shop," the plant which moves away from its workers into low-wage, non-union territory in order to gain a competitive advantage over other employers who have established union wages and conditions.

"Making Unions Responsible"

Taft-Hartley exposes the unions to endless harassment in the courts. This is called "making unions responsible," but is effect is to make them responsible for things which are not their fault, such as "wildcat" strikes or individual acts of sabotage or violence not authorized by the union. It makes it possible for an employer to badger a union with legal actions until its treasury is drained and then break it by a frontal attack. Defending its rights against the Taft-Hartley law has already cost the International Typographical Union $1,800,000.

Injunctions

For fifty years the most dangerous employer weapon with which workers had to contend was the injunction, a procedure by which one man, a judge, without knowing the merits of the dispute, can issue a decree which turns a legal strike into an illegal one. This procedure was so scandalously and obviously undemocratic that it was finally abolished in the Norris-LaGuardia Act, which, together with the Wagner Act, was one of the great legal milestones in the liberation of labor. But Taft-Hartley has repealed the Norris-LaGuardia Act. It has not only

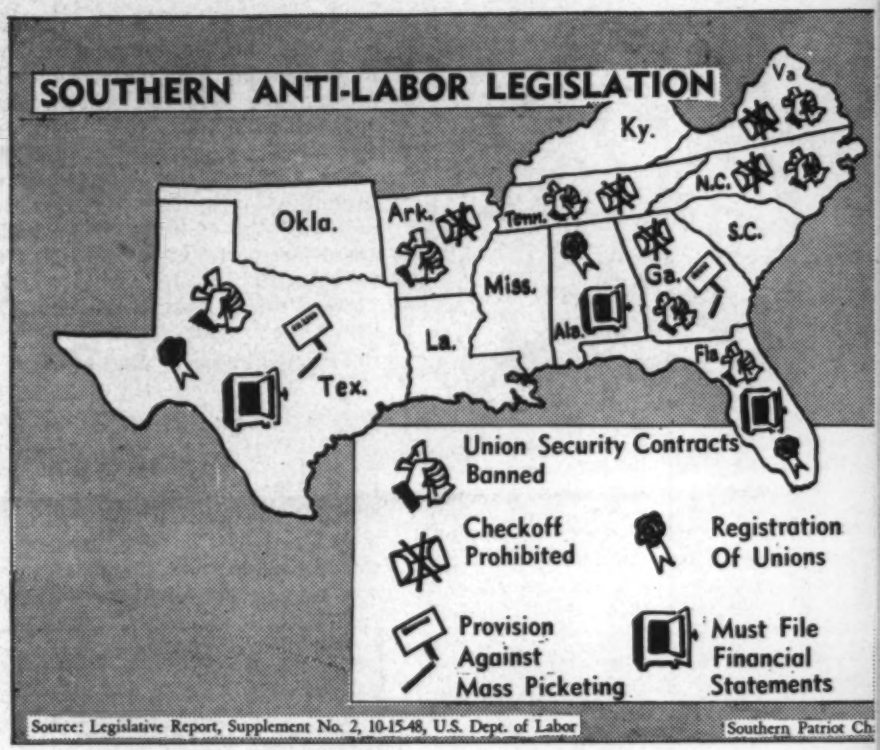
restored the injunction, but has actually relieved the employer of the trouble and expense of applying for it, since the government will get it for him. This is called "keeping production going" for the sake of "protecting the public." But it is a method which assumes that production must be kept going by forcing the workers to give in, without ever inquiring whether it is the workers or the boss who ought to give in. Such a method is necessarily based on the assumption that strikes are always caused by the refusal of the union to settle on the employer's terms, never by the refusal of the employer to settle on the union terms. Such a method assumes in advance that the boss is always right.

The Taft-Hartley law deprives unions of the right to petition the Labor Board for an election unless their officers have filed affidavits swearing that they are not Communists. Some labor leaders are inclined to live with this provision, feeling that it is not aimed at them, since they are not Communists. They would do well to remember that the Taft-Hartley Act as a whole is aimed at the labor movement as a whole and that this clause was dreamed up by the same people who wrote the rest of the Act and for the same purposes. Its effect is to deprive all union members of the elementary democratic right to choose anyone they please as their leaders. Its effect is to expose any militant labor leader who signs, Communist or not, to investigation and possible prosecution, if a single employer stooge, disgruntled rival, or personal enemy can be found to swear that leader is a Communist. The effect of the affidavit clause is to paralyse the union by splitting it internally over "ideological" issues. Its effect is to paralize the labor movement as a whole by producing civil war within it, encouraging unions to "raid" each other.

"The bill is not a milk-toast bill. It covers about three-quarters of the matters pressed upon us very strenuously by employers."
—SEN. ROBERT A. TAFT

"It is a bill to strangle the American democratic labor movement."
—SEN. CLAUDE PEPPER

"The bill was written sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, by the National Association of Manufacturers."
—REP. DONALD L. O'TOOLE



Anti-Labor State Laws

The same corporation influences who succeeded in putting the Taft-Hartley Act through Congress have also managed to put a number of measures of similar purpose through the state legislatures. The accompanying map shows which Southern states have succumbed, despite the South's desperate need for unionization, to some of the more important of these provisions. It is by no means a complete summary of all the anti-labor legislation in the Southern States. It includes only the commonest and most important measures.

Union security contracts are completely outlawed in seven Southern States: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. This is the famous "right to work law," fathered and sponsored by the "Christian-Americans," an organization of Southern fascists exposed in previous issues of the Southern PATRIOT. It is a trick clause which states that no person shall be denied the right to work because of membership or non-membership in a labor organization. To persons unfamiliar with labor problems, this may sound fair and even impartial. Its actual effect is to prohibit not only the closed shop but any form of union security contract, even if all the workers want it and the boss is willing to sign. Its necessary consequence is to deprive the majority of the workers in a shop of the democratic right to make the majority will effective, because there is never a union shop unless the majority want it. Employers of today are eloquent about the "right not to join a union," which they speak of as though it were a right